Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 178743
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S E C R E T STATE 178743

NODIS
FOR UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM FROM NEA SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PGOV, SA, US

SUBJECT: DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SAUDIS ON LONDON FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING

REFS: (A) STATE 167915; (B) DHAHRAN 0858; (C) STATE 169134; (D) JIDDA 4977

1. REFTELS GIVE BASIC LINE AMBASSADOR WEST HAS BEEN ASKED TO TAKE WITH SAG IN URGING SAUDI SUPPORT FOR LONDON MEETING AND REACTION OF PRINCE SAUD IN TWO DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT. WE NOTE SAUD'S CRITICAL ATTITUDE TOWARD LONDON MEETING EVIDENT IN FIRST DISCUSSION SEEMED TO HAVE SOFTENED SOMEWHAT IN THE SECOND DISCUSSION. WE NOTE FROM CAIRO REPORTING POSSIBILITY THAT CROWN PRINCE FAHD MAY BE BACK IN SAUDI ARABIA BY THE TIME YOU ARRIVE AND MAY HAVE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 178743

STOPPED TO TALK WITH SADAT ALONG THE WAY. IF YOU DO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK WITH FAHD WE WOULD EXPECT ON BASIS OF PAST PERFORMANCE HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS LONDON MEETING MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT MORE REASONABLE THAN SAUD'S BUT MUCH OF COURSE WILL DEPEND ON HIS IMPRESSIONS FROM TALKING WITH SADAT, IF HE INDEED DOES SO PRIOR TO RETURNING. IN ANY EVENT YOUR VISIT WILL PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT CHANCE TO

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

TRY TO FIRM UP THE SAUDIS A LITTLE MORE IN SUPPORT OF THE NEGOTIATING STRATEGY OF WHICH THE LONDON MEETING IS AN

IMPORTANT STEP.

2. IN EXPANDING ON BASIC LINE CONTAINED STATE REFTELS YOU MAY WISH TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS IN TALKING WITH SAUDIS ABOUT LONDON MEETING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO ON-GOING NEGOTIATING PROCESS:

-- WHILE WE DO NOT EXPECT MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN NEGOTIATIONS IN LONDON WE DO SEE IT AS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN MOVING PROCESS FORWARD, BOTH IN TERMS OF CLARIFYING THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AND OF DEVELOPING NEW MOMENTUM IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

-- WE ARE PLEASED THAT SADAT'S CONTACTS WITH THE ISRAELIS IN EUROPE PRIOR TO LONDON MEETING SEEM TO HAVE ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO MOVEMENT IN THE PROCESS, SUGGESTING SOME FLEXIBILITY ON BOTH SIDES, AND REINFORCING THE ATMOSPHERE OF SERIOUS SEARCH FOR A MIDDLE EAST PEACE.

-- WE ANTICIPATE THAT LONDON MEETINGS WILL BE INFORMAL IN TONE AND WILL INVOLVE THE SECRETARY IN PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH BOTH DAYAN AND KAMEL AS WELL AS DISCUSSIONS AMONG ALL THREE.

SECRET

SECRET

-- WE HOPE THAT IN THIS INFORMAL ATMOSPHERE BOTH FOREIGN MINISTERS WILL MAKE GOOD USE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PROBE CAREFULLY POSITIONS OF THE OTHER GOVERNMENT.

-- WE BELIEVE THAT MEETING OFFERS A PROMISING POSSIBILITY FOR EACH SIDE TO BECOME CLEARER IN ITS PERCEPTIONS OF WHERE THERE ALREADY MAY EXIST SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT, OF WHERE THERE ARE PROSPECTS FOR NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCES, AND OF WHERE THE MOST INTRACTABLE DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS EXIST.

-- WE WOULD ALSO HOPE TO EMERGE FROM LONDON WITH AN UNDER-STANDING ON THE NEXT PROCEDURAL STEPS, INCLUDING FURTHER DIRECT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WE CONSIDER IT OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT THE DIRECT NEGOTIATING PROCESS, NOW RESUMED, BE CONTINUED IN A GENUINE EFFORT TO HAMMER OUT AGREEMENT ON THE ISSUES. THIS WILL ALSO BE VITAL TO OUR ABILITY TO PUT FORWARD SUGGESTIONS AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME FOR WAYS TO BRIDGE THE DIFFERENCES.

-- WE ANTICIPATE IMMEDIATELY AFTER LONDON MEETING SENDING

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

AMBASSADOR ATHERTON BACK TO THE MIDDLE EAST TO TOUCH BASE

WITH VARIOUS KEY GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING SAUDI ARABIA, TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS, AND TO CONSULT WITH RESPECT TO FURTHER STEPS. THEN WE WILL BE ASSESSING DESIRABILITY OF SECRETARY'S RETURNING TO THE REGION, PERHAPS FOR FURTHER PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN THE DIRECT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

-- WE FULLY APPRECIATE SENSE IN SOME ARAB GOVERNMENTS THAT PEACE PROCESS HAS MADE LITTLE HEADWAY IN RECENT MONTHS. WE HOPE THAT BY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE ALTERNATIVES, HOWEVER, SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER ARAB STATES WILL SEE THE MERIT OF THE COURSE WE ARE TAKING.

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SAG WILL RECALL DIFFICULTIES WE FACED LAST FALL IN RE-CONVENING GENEVA CONFERENCE. WE HAVE SEEN NOTHING SUB-SEQUENT THAT WOULD SUGGEST IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS OF RE-SOLVING THESE PROBLEMS IN ORDER TO MAKE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AT THIS TIME A CONSTRUCTIVE ALTER-NATIVE. WE WOULD ASK SAUDIS TO REFLECT ON SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE AS RESULT OF SADAT INITIATIVE: VERY SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN RECONCILING DIFFERENCES ON SINAI ISSUES AND EVEN ON WEST BANK/GAZA/ PALESTINIAN ISSUE--MOST DIFFICULT OF ALL. IT IS NO SMALL ACHIEVEMENT THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE NOW PUT CONCRETE PRO-POSALS ON TABLE. IN ALL PROBABILITY, SAUDIS SHOULD REALIZE, NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT SADAT INITIATIVE. IMPORTANT THING NOW IS TO BUILD ON THIS FOUNDATION. IT IS OUR JUDGMENT THAT THIS WILL REQUIRE CONTINUATION OF GENUINE NEGOTIATING PROCESS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES AS WELL AS STAUNCH SUPPORT FOR SADAT'S COURAGEOUS ROLE FROM HIS ARAB FRIENDS. WE, OF COURSE, HAVE OBJECTIVE OF BROADENING NEGOTIATIONS AT APPROPRIATE POINT TO INCLUDE OTHER ARAB PARTIES AND EXPECT TO CON-SULT WITH SAUDIS ON BEST BASIS FOR DELIVERING THAT PURPOSE.

-- IN PRESENT SITUATION WE ARE IMPRESSED THAT CONTINUED SAUDI SUPPORT FOR SADAT IS CRITICAL TO MOVEMENT TOWARD PEACE AND IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY HELPFUL IF SAUDI GOVERNMENT COULD MAKE ITS SYMPATHY FOR STRATEGY WE ARE PURSUING KNOWN TO APPROPRIATE ARAB GOVENRMENTS.
CHRISTOPHER

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20 Mar 2014
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